

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**  
**Interagency Council on Homelessness**



**Notes from Meeting of the Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH)**

Date and Time: February 14, 2012 2:00pm – 3:30pm

Location: N Street Village, 1333 N Street, NW Washington, DC 20005

Approximate Attendance: 105 persons

**Welcome and Introductions**

Allen Y. Lew, City Administrator, called the meeting to order and introduced Eric Goulet who gave a budget briefing presentation on outcomes from FY11, the current fiscal year budget and the challenges the city faces as we approach FY13. The ICH members were then asked to give their committee/subcommittee updates. A copy of the FY13 budget briefing that was discussed can be found on the ICH website:

[http://www.ich.dc.gov/ich/lib/ich/pdf/FY13\\_District\\_Budget\\_Briefing.pdf](http://www.ich.dc.gov/ich/lib/ich/pdf/FY13_District_Budget_Briefing.pdf).

**Public Comment Period**

Due to time constraints, the City Administrator allowed for comments and questions following the budget presentation and briefly at the conclusion of the meeting.

- One meeting attendee asked why the City couldn't take some of the extra revenue and increase funding for the Department of Human Services so that more homeless individuals could be served.
- Another attendee suggested an additional increase in the property tax to help bridge the financial gap for FY13.
- A male attendee complained about the number of non-District residents who are able to obtain District jobs over city residents.
- A female attendee, who serves the homeless population, complained about the rate by which the homeless are receiving assistance and demanded to know how much longer the homeless will have to wait for relief from the City.

**Summary of the Pre Meeting Discussion**

The pre meeting discussion focused on the Coalition of Housing and Homeless Organizations (COHHO) and its efforts to support the ICH. The discussion gave an introduction on what COHHO is and the kind of work it does to end homelessness in the District. Attendees offered a few ideas on what the coalition could focus on this year, including external factors which contribute to the steady increase of the homeless population, attendance at community meetings, job training and placement, establishing partnerships with service providers to help bridge the gap between the homeless and resources. Another participant mentioned the need to address the poor

treatment of homeless individuals by service providers when they seek assistance. A male attendee also called for better outreach services to homeless individuals and homeless families.

### **ICH Committee Reports**

#### **Executive Committee – Scott McNeilly, Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (WLCH) & David A. Berns, DC Department of Human Services (DHS)**

- The next meeting is scheduled for April 17<sup>th</sup> at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Housing Resource Center.

### **Operations and Logistics Committee**

- Implementation of the winter plan is a major topic for discussion for this committee.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at DHS-64 New York Ave NE, Sixth Floor.

### **Shelter Capacity Subcommittee**

- The committee recently distributed a resource document created by the shelter capacity subcommittee to assist staff with referrals to available services. Copies will be emailed to all participants.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am at SOME. The primary focus will be on servicing men; however the capacity of women continues to increase, so the group will continue to monitor that.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

- The primary focus will be monitoring and implementing the annual work plan. The committee has met twice since the last ICH meeting; in January the committee reviewed the annual work plan and examined the self-sufficiency matrix, which is being distributed to the clients to gauge their own situations. This tool will help agencies to monitor its effectiveness in providing services.
- The committee is also exploring the available resources within permanent supportive housing programs due to the large need for affordable housing.
- The committee will meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month starting on February 28<sup>th</sup> – will focus on the TANF redesign proposals.

### **Youth Subcommittee**

- The subcommittee will focus its efforts on three priority areas: housing and support service capacity; prevention and improved systems coordination; streamlining access for young people.
- The group will meet with community stakeholders to learn more about policies, changes in systems that affect different agencies and other issues.

### **Veterans Subcommittee**

- The committee has met with several local and federal agencies and community organizations over the last several months, and they are currently focusing on the following areas: veterans and the criminal justice system, education, health and training for veterans in the area of trades (building, construction, etc.). A working group has been established into three sub-groups: homeless prevention, housing and outreach to other interest groups. The committee also desires to engage the private sector in the near future.
- The next meeting will be held on March 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am at DHS 64 New York Avenue NE Sixth Floor.

### **PSH Committee**

- The committee met last Tuesday and is currently working to finalize an MOU by the end of this month to begin circulation by beginning of March. They are currently on target to produce a consolidated RFP which will come out of the MOU document—will be released this summer for the FY13 period.
- The next committee meeting will be on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup> to discuss resource allocation for upcoming projects. A needs assessment will be done to help direct program objectives for next fiscal year.

### **Strategic Annual Work Plan -Discussion and Vote**

- A vote was held on the plan which was presented at the last meeting. The idea is for everyone to monitor progress on each goal outlined in the plan. The reported success and failures within the plan will be made public.
- One meeting attendee inquired about the possibility of incorporating some language regarding affordable housing as a goal. Members of the strategic work plan committee assured her that affordable housing is part of the work plan.
- The committee voted unanimously in favor of the work plan.

### **Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Presentation**

- Eric Goulet presented the outcomes from FY11, the current fiscal year budget and the challenges the city faces as we approach FY13.
- In general, the city saw a \$400 million increase in the projected ending balance at the conclusion of FY2011. This is primarily due to unanticipated increases in some revenue including estate taxes, income withholding taxes, agency spending controls and other revenue. The mayor is fully committed to both establishing a structurally balanced budget and allocating funds toward homeless services.
- As we approach FY13, the biggest concern for the city is the rapid increase in costs of services versus the slow increase in revenue—revenue is growing at a rate of about 1%. Part of the challenge for FY13 is also the uncertainty within the federal government regarding future funding cuts that will affect the District's budget.
- A copy of the FY13 budget briefing that was discussed can be found on the ICH website: [http://www.ich.dc.gov/ich/lib/ich/pdf/FY13\\_District\\_Budget\\_Briefing.pdf](http://www.ich.dc.gov/ich/lib/ich/pdf/FY13_District_Budget_Briefing.pdf).

### **Family Shelter Crisis and TANF Redesign Pilot**

- One hundred beds have been added at DC General, which will be available by Monday February 20th; currently 203 families are being housed in hotels.
- Thirty percent of TANF clients are either homeless or in unstable housing situations, ninety-five percent of those who are being housed in hotels are also on TANF and other assistance programs. These factors are the reason for this redesign pilot project.
- The group is currently in the process of merging homeless services with the TANF homeless services program so there can be a unified approach to providing services to each family. The plan will be implemented in a couple weeks and will aim to reach approximately 800 families.
- The TANF intake system will also be merged with homeless services by October 1.

### **Public Comment Period**

- One attendee inquired about the possibility of providing targeted services to single homeless males.
- A female attendee commented that the current shelter capacity problem is the largest she has seen in her lifetime and she is concerned by the number of families being housed in hotels, given the challenges facing the City's budget. She would like to see that shelter capacity is placed as a top priority this year.

### **Announcement from Council Member Jim Graham's Office**

- A two-part oversight hearing will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:30am in room 412 (part 1) and March 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am in room 123 (part 2) in the Wilson Building